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Tyler, Texas



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## Heroes & Friends

## By Margaret Loftis

've always said that I am the product of ■ multiple blessings – "God's winks," I call them. Somehow, just when I need it most, someone or something comes along to help me take the next step in life.

I'm thankful for the many individuals who have been a part of that journey, who took interest enough to see my potential and inspire me to take on new challenges.

I think back on my time as a freshman at Tyler Junior College in 1941 and my job helping Mrs. Mildred Stringer with the Tyler High School Blue Brigade – that proud drum and bugle corps pep squad I'd been a part of in my high school days. My wage of 33 cents an hour was meager even then, but it was enough to pay my freshman tuition at TJC.

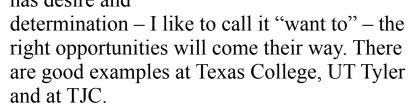
Years later, Mrs. Stringer would come to my aid again, this time by asking Harry Loftis – while he was stationed in Wichita Falls prior to his departure to serve as a glider pilot in the European Theater during World War II – if he was staying in touch with me. That little nudge got the two of us back in touch and the end result was a marriage of 57 years to one of the most wonderful men to have ever graced this earth.

Harry felt God's winks, too. He didn't get the TJC scholarship he'd applied and hoped so dearly for, but Tyler banker Mr. I. Greenburg loaned him \$50 so he could begin college. Years later it was fun to tease Dr. Harry Jenkins – TJC president – about how we appreciated his support! Harry had gone on to receive numerous citations for his bravery and service in the U.S. Army Air Corps, finished college and his doctorate at the University of Texas Law School, become a judge and served as a board member for Texas College

and TJC. When Dr. Jenkins passed away in 1983, Harry was still on the TJC Board. Harry served on the TJC Board for 30 years.

Sometimes the blessings we yearn for are not meant to be a part of the plan.

But if a person has desire and



I think one of the greatest blessings I have had over the years has been to help others, to be the one who provides opportunity to someone else. Providing for others is not only rewarding, but it keeps you from taking ownership of your success. Owning your success is not a good thing!

Harry and I were able to be a part of scholarship opportunities at TJC so that other students with "want to" could find their way. He would run across people who'd had a hardship in life that kept them from finishing their education. They would say "I'm too old to go back to school." To this, Harry would always ask: "How old are you?" After their reply, he would then ask: "How old are you going to be in four or five years, regardless?"

Prayer and taking time to give back served Harry well and have served me well for all of my 86 years. Throw in a little "want to" and one will find their own multitude of blessings.

TJC Hero and Friend Margaret Ann George Loftis established the area's first learning resource center at Moore Middle School in 1956 and established the learning resource center at Robert E. Lee High School in 1958. She worked in public education for 16 years. She is a member of the TJC Alumni Association Board of Directors, was the second president of Sister Cities International, helped establish the Eisenhower Golf Tournament, and is the co-founder – along with Mary Ann Chenowith – of Tyler's Day of Prayer, now the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast. She was named an Honorary member of the Apache Belles in 2002 and is active at Marvin United Methodist Church and in Law Wives and Tyler Church Women, among other groups. The Loftises were honored by Texas College during its Legacy Dinner in March.

